

Dear Sacred Hearts Parishioner:

We will begin Public Masses again this coming weekend May 30th and 31st. Because of the continued concern regarding COVID-19 cases and the ongoing danger of infection, the Diocese wants to be prudential in light of this public health issue and so is moving forward gradually. In the Diocese of Madison the Dispensation from the Sunday obligation remains in effect. Consequently no one is obligated to attend Mass to fulfill the Sunday Obligation. In fact, the Diocese encourages the elderly and at-risk faithful people to refrain from Mass. This includes those who are over 65 years of age or those who have underlying health issues, etc. Certainly, anyone who is feeling ill should not attend Mass either.

At this point Mass attendance is limited to 25% of the capacity of the church. For us at Sacred Hearts that is 140 people. We cannot go beyond that number and we will be keeping a count as people enter the church. We will continue to livestream Masses for those who cannot attend Mass because of health issues or the capacity of the church. Physical distancing will need to be maintained in church which means six feet from each other except for members of a single household. We will seat people every other pew. The Diocese strongly encourages those attending Mass to wear a mask.

Only the middle doors on Columbus Street and the handicapped entrance of church will be open to enter so that we can maintain the number of people entering. You will also notice there will be no congregational singing at Mass. Only an organist and cantor will be

present at Mass to provide the music. There will not be either an entrance or recessional procession. Rather the priest will enter from the sacristy. There will also not be a presentation of gifts and obviously no sign of peace. Only the priests will distribute Holy Communion doing so by the side aisles of church and all receiving Communion will need to maintain physical distancing as the line moves forward for Communion. Lastly people will be dismissed from church pew-by-pew beginning with the back pews first. We are to avoid any crowding at exits nor can there be people congregating as they leave Mass.

So, thanks be to God we can return now to Mass. However, this is being done in a different manner to protect everyone's health to the best of our ability. How long these restrictions will last will depend on the spread of COVID-19. Hopefully we can get back to normal soon. We ask your cooperation and help. We are doing the best we can in these difficult days always following the directives of the Diocese. As a side message as I write this Dane County is still maintaining the current limit of nine or fewer persons at funerals and weddings.

Thank you for your understanding and prayers.

God bless,

Msgr. Duane